

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 00812 100435Z

12

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7143

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

COMCARIBSEAFRON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0812

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ST PINT

SUBJ: ST LUCIA ELECTIONS

REF: BTN 806

1. FOLLOWING RECOUNT OF BALLOTS UNITED WORKERS' PARTY (UWP) CANDIDATES WERE DECLARED WINNERS IN BOTH VIEUX FORT NORTH AND CASTRIES SOUTHEAST CONSTITUENCIES, GIVING UWP TEN TO SEGEN PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. POSSIBILITY OF LEGAL BATTLES OVER ELECTION RESULTS STILL EXISTS, HOWEVER, MEANING THAT JOHN COMPTON MAY BEGIN HIS THIRD TERM AS PREMIER UNDER CLOUD OF UNCERTAINTY.

2. FOR COMPTON, WHO DURING UWP CONVENTION IN OCTOBER HAD PREDICTED MORE IMPRESSIVE VICTORY, CLOSENESS OF OUTCOME IS POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT, UNDERSCORED BY FACT THAT TWO MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET, ONE OF THEM HAND-PICKED, WERE NOT RE-ELEITED. GIVEN SLIMNESS OF UWP'S MAJORITY COMPTON CAN ILL-AFFORD THE
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PAGE 02 BRIDGE 00812 100435Z

RESIGNATIONS, DEFECTIONS AND CRITICISMS FROM WITHIN HIS OWN

RANKS HE HAS ENDURED DURING PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS (SEE BTN A-218 AND A-166, 1972), MAKING IT INCUMBENT UPON HIM TO MODIFY HIS ALLEGEDLY HAUGHTY AND DISTANT ATTITUDE AND COOPERATE MORE CLOSELY WITH MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY. AT SAME TIME, COMPTON MAY FEEL MORE COMFORT-
ABLE IN DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY TO
SOME OF UWP'S NEWLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES THAN HE DID TO HIS FORMER CABINET MEMBERS, SOME OF WHOM HE CLEARLY NEITHER RESPECTED NOR TRUSTED.

3. LIKEWISE, COMPTON CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO EXHIBIT SAME DISDAIN FOR OFFICIAL OPPOSITION HE HAS SHOWN IN PAST. DESPITE ITS EVIDENT DIVISIONS OVER IDEOLOGY AND LEADERSHIP, SLP HAS CLEARLY BEEN INFUSED WITH NEW ENERGY, TALENT AND POWER AND ENJOYS POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING HEALTHIEST AND MOST VIABLE OPPOSITION PARTY THROUGHOUT ASSOCIATED STATES. OPPOSITION'S GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT IS DEFEAT OF GEORGE ODLUM, FOUNDER OF SOMEWHAT RADICAL EDUCATIONAL AND PRESSURE GROUP "THE FORUM," INITIATOR OF THE MERGER OF SLP AND ST LUCIA ACTION MOVEMENT, AND DRIVING FORCE BEHIND SLP'S LONG AND HARD-FLIGHT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. ODLUM HAS LONG BEEN REGARDED AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO COMPTON, BUT HIS DEFEAT BY MRS HERALDINE ROCK, SECRETARY OF BANANA GROWERS ASSOCIATION AND REPUTED POWER WITHIN THE UWP, HAS DIMMED, AT LEAST MOMENTARILY, HIS POLITICAL FUTURE. NEVERTHELESS, WITH ELECTION OF ODLUM'S BROTHER, JON RPT JON, AND PARTICULARLY OF PETER JOSIE, ODLUM'S CO-PARTNER IN FOUNDING OF BOTH "THE "FORUM" AND SLAM, MORE YOUTHFUL AND RADICAL ELEMENTS OF ST LUCIA SOCIETY WILL FOR FIRST TIME HAVE VOICE IN PARLIAMENT, WHICH ALSO AUGURS WELL FOR FUTURE HEALTH OF ST LUCIA POLITICS.

4. THAT ST LUCIANS REGARDED THIS ELECTION AS IMPORTANT ONE IS EVIDENT FROM HIGH VOTER TURNOUT (83 PERCENT). WHILE SIZEABLE VOTE GIVEN TO OPPOSITION CANDIDATES (45 PERCENT) IS INDICATION OF POPULAR FRUSTRATION OVER RISING PRICES AND RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT, IT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT SOME VOTERS WISHED TO REGISTER THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH COMPTON'S SOMEWHAT OLYMPIAN AND AUTHORITARIAN

RULE. NEVERTHELESS, DECISION TO RETURN UWP TO POWER WOULD APPEAR TO BE FORTUNATE ONE FOR ST LUCIA IN THAT IT WILL ALLOW COMPTON TO BUILD ON IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS HE
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PAGE 03 BRIDGE 00812 100435Z

HAS ESTABLISHED DURING PAST TEN YEARS. DOUBTLESS MANY VOTERS TOOK SERIOUSLY COMPTON'S WARNING THAT THIS WAS NO TIME FOR FRIVOLOUS EXPERIMENTATION BY THOSE INEXPERIENCED IN GOVERNING. GIVEN ITS GREATER VOICE IN GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, THE SLP WILL PERHAPS BE ABLE TO ENSURE THAT ST LUCIA'S DEVELOPMENT, WHICH TO DATE HAS BEEN PRIMARILY URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL, WILL BE MORE EVENLY BALANCED AND PACED AND CTS BENEFITS MORE EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED. AT SAME TIME, NEXT FIVE YEARS WILL GIVE SLP TIME

TO ACQUIRE EXPERISNCE NECESSARY TO MAKE IT MORE CAPABLE AND
ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE.
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